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Front Cover Photo: More than one million Muslims from
all over the world praying together at
the *Haram* Mosque in Makkah.

Back Cover Photo: The Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Mosque
in Madinah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

A BRIEF ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

Second Edition

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PREFACE

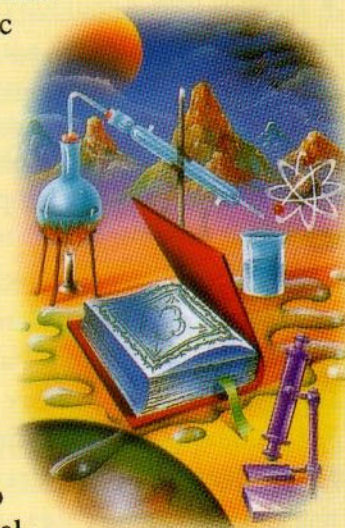
This book is a brief guide to understanding Islam. It consists of three chapters.

The first chapter, “**Some Evidence for the Truth of Islam,**” answers some important questions which some people ask:

- Is the Qur'an truly the literal word of God, revealed by Him?
- Is Muhammad ﷺ truly a prophet sent by God?
- Is Islam truly a religion from God?

In this chapter, six kinds of evidence are mentioned:

- 1) **The Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an:** This section discusses (with illustrations) some recently discovered scientific facts mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, which was revealed fourteen centuries ago.
- 2) **The Great Challenge to Produce One Chapter Like the Chapters of the Holy Qur'an:** In the Qur'an, God challenged all human beings to produce a single chapter like the chapters of the Qur'an. Ever since the Qur'an was revealed, fourteen centuries ago, until this day, no one has been able to meet this challenge, even though the smallest chapter in the Qur'an (Chapter 108) is only ten words.



- (1) These Arabic words ﷻ mean, 'May God exalt his mention and protect him from imperfection.'

- 3) **Biblical Prophecies on the Advent of Muhammad ﷺ, the Prophet of Islam:** In this section, some of the Biblical prophecies on the advent of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are discussed.
- 4) **The Verses in the Qur'an That Mention Future Events Which Later Came to Pass:** The Qur'an mentioned future events which later came to pass, for example, the victory of the Romans over the Persians.
- 5) **Miracles Performed by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:** Many miracles were performed by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. These miracles were witnessed by many people.
- 6) **The Simple Life of Muhammad ﷺ:** This clearly indicates that Muhammad ﷺ was not a false prophet who claimed prophethood to attain material gains, greatness, or power.

From these six kinds of evidence, we conclude that:

- The Qur'an must be the literal word of God, revealed by Him.
- Muhammad ﷺ is truly a prophet sent by God.
- Islam is truly a religion from God.

If we would like to know if a religion is true or false, we should not depend on our emotions, feelings, or traditions. Rather, we should depend on our reason and intellect. When God sent the prophets, He supported them with miracles and evidence which proved that they were truly prophets sent by God and hence that the religion they came with is true.

The second chapter, "Some Benefits of Islam," mentions some of the benefits that Islam provides for the individual, such as:

- 1) **The Door to Eternal Paradise**
- 2) **Salvation from Hellfire**
- 3) **Real Happiness and Inner Peace**
- 4) **Forgiveness for All Previous Sins.**

The third chapter, "General Information on Islam," provides general information on Islam, corrects some misconceptions about it, and answers some commonly asked questions, such as:

- What does Islam say about terrorism?
- What is the status of women in Islam?



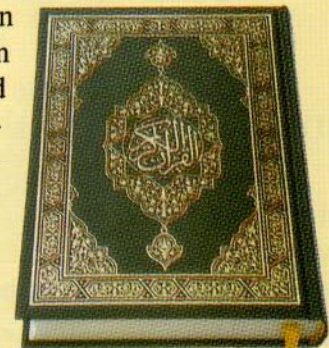
Chapter 1

SOME EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF ISLAM

God has supported His last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with many miracles and much evidence which proves that he is a true Prophet sent by God. Also, God has supported His last revealed book, the Holy Qur'an, with many miracles that prove that this Qur'an is the literal word of God, revealed by Him, and that it was not authored by any human being. This chapter discusses some of this evidence.

(1) The Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is the literal word of God, which He revealed to His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through the Angel Gabriel. It was memorized by Muhammad ﷺ, who then dictated it to his Companions. They, in turn, memorized it, wrote it down, and reviewed it with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reviewed the Qur'an with the Angel Gabriel once each year and twice in the last year of his life. From the time the Qur'an was revealed, until this day, there has always been a huge number of Muslims who have memorized all of the Qur'an, letter by letter. Some of them have even been able to memorize all of the Qur'an by the age of ten. Not one letter of the Qur'an has been changed over the centuries.



The Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an, which was revealed fourteen centuries ago, mentioned facts only recently discovered or proven by scientists. This proves without doubt that the Qur'an must be the literal word of

God, revealed by Him to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and that the Qur'an was not authored by Muhammad ﷺ or by any other human being. This also proves that Muhammad ﷺ is truly a prophet sent by God. It is beyond reason that anyone fourteen hundred years ago would have known these facts discovered or proven only recently with advanced equipment and sophisticated scientific methods. Some examples follow.

A) The Qur'an on Human Embryonic Development:

In the Holy Qur'an, God speaks about the stages of man's embryonic development:

﴿ We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into an *alaqah* (leech, suspended thing, and blood clot), then We made the *alaqah* into a *mudghah* (chewed substance)... ﴾¹ (Qur'an, 23:12-14)

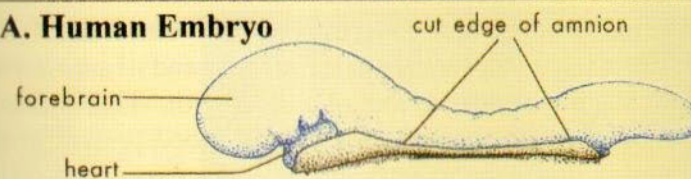
Literally, the Arabic word *alaqah* has three meanings: (1) leech, (2) suspended thing, and (3) blood clot.

In comparing a leech to an embryo in the *alaqah* stage, we find similarity between the two,² as we can see in figure 1. Also, the embryo at this stage obtains nourishment from the blood of the mother, similar to the leech, which feeds on the blood of others.³

The second meaning of the word *alaqah* is "suspended thing." This is what we can see in figures 2 and 3, the suspension of the embryo, during the *alaqah* stage, in the womb of the mother.

- (1) Please note that what is between these special brackets {...} in this book is only a translation of the meaning of the Qur'an. It is not the Qur'an itself, which is in Arabic.
- (2) *The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 8.
- (3) *Human Development as Described in the Qur'an and Sunnah*, Moore and others, p. 36.

A. Human Embryo



B. Leech

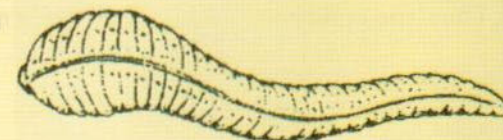


Figure 1: Drawings illustrating the similarities in appearance between a leech and a human embryo at the *alaqah* stage. (Leech drawing from *Human Development as Described in the Qur'an and Sunnah*, Moore and others, p. 37, modified from *Integrated Principles of Zoology*, Hickman and others. Embryo drawing from *The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 73.)

Figure 2: We can see in this diagram the suspension of an embryo during the *alaqah* stage in the womb (uterus) of the mother. (*The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 66.)

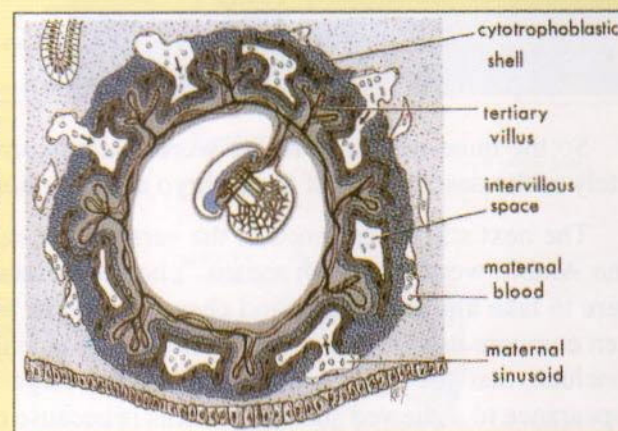


Figure 3: In this photomicrograph, we can see the suspension of an embryo (marked B) during the *alaqah* stage (about 15 days old) in the womb of the mother. The actual size of the embryo is about 0.6 mm. (*The Developing Human*, Moore, 3rd ed., p. 66, from *Histology*, Leeson and Leeson.)



F) The Qur'an on Deep Seas and Internal Waves:

God has said in the Qur'an:

﴿ Or (the unbelievers' state) is like the darkness in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds. Darkenesses, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand, he cannot see it.... ﴾ (Qur'an, 24:40)

This verse mentions the darkness found in deep seas and oceans, where if a man stretches out his hand, he cannot see it. The darkness in deep seas and oceans is found around a depth of 200 meters and below. At this depth, there is almost no light (see figure 15). Below a depth of 1000 meters there is no light at all.¹ Human

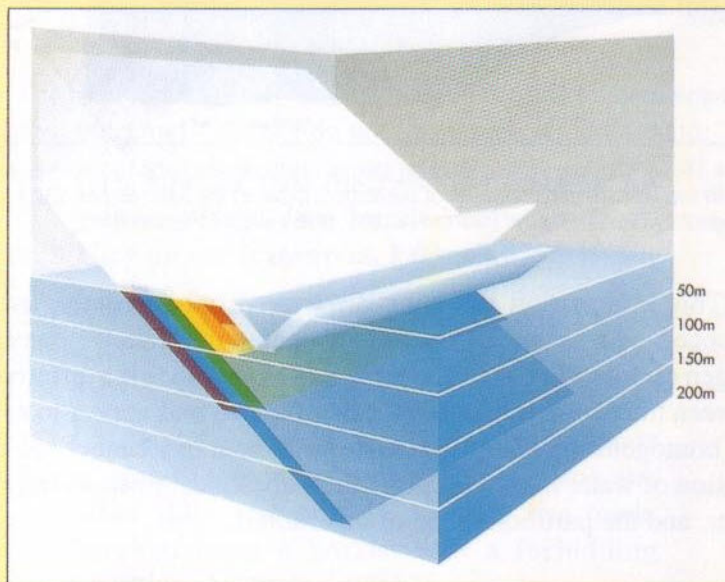


Figure 15: Between 3 and 30 percent of the sunlight is reflected at the sea surface. Then almost all of the seven colors of the light spectrum are absorbed one after another in the first 200 meters, except the blue light. (*Oceans*, Elder and Pernetta, p. 27.)

(1) *Oceans*, Elder and Pernetta, p. 27.

beings are not able to dive more than forty meters without the aid of submarines or special equipment. Human beings cannot survive unaided in the deep dark part of the oceans, such as at a depth of 200 meters.

Scientists have recently discovered this darkness by means of special equipment and submarines that have enabled them to dive into the depths of the oceans.

We can also understand from the following sentences in the previous verse, “...in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds...”, that the deep waters of seas and oceans are covered by waves, and above these waves are other waves. It is clear that the second set of waves are the surface waves that we see, because the verse mentions that above the second waves there are clouds. But what about the first waves? Scientists have recently discovered that there are internal waves which “occur on density interfaces between layers of different densities.”¹ (see figure 16). The internal waves cover the

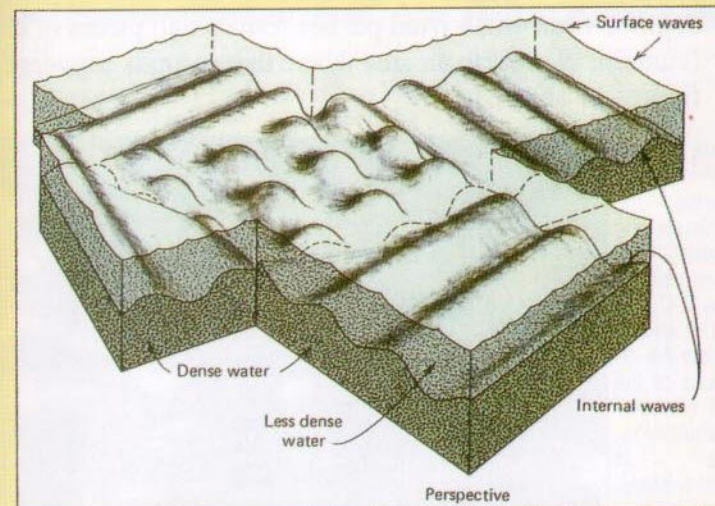


Figure 16: Internal waves at interface between two layers of water of different densities. One is dense (the lower one), the other one is less dense (the upper one). (*Oceanography*, Gross, p. 204.)

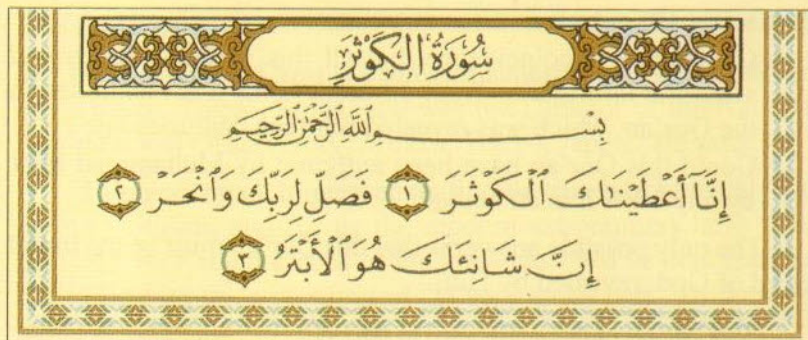
(1) *Oceanography*, Gross, p. 205.

(2) The Great Challenge to Produce One Chapter Like the Chapters of the Holy Qur'an

God has said in the Qur'an:

﴿ And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed (the Qur'an) to Our worshiper (Muhammad ﷺ), then produce a chapter like it, and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides God if you are truthful. And if you do not do it, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones. It has been prepared for disbelievers. And give good news (O Muhammad) to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens (Paradise) in which rivers flow.... ﴾ (Qur'an, 2:23-25)

Ever since the Qur'an was revealed, fourteen centuries ago, no one has been able to produce a single chapter like the chapters of the Qur'an in their beauty, eloquence, splendor, wise legislation, true information, true prophecy, and other perfect attributes. Also, note that the smallest chapter in the Qur'an (Chapter 108) is only ten words, yet no one has ever been able to meet this challenge,

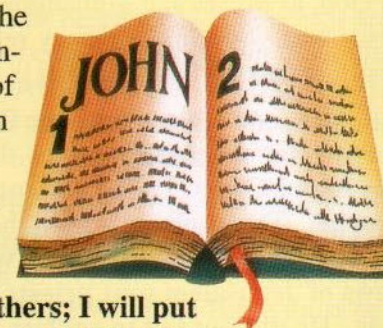


The smallest chapter in the Holy Qur'an (Chapter 108) is only ten words, yet no one has ever been able to meet the challenge to produce one chapter like the chapters of the Holy Qur'an.

then or today.¹ Some of the disbelieving Arabs who were enemies of Muhammad ﷺ tried to meet this challenge to prove that Muhammad ﷺ was not a true prophet, but they failed to do so.² This failure was despite the fact that the Qur'an was revealed in their own language and dialect and that the Arabs at the time of Muhammad ﷺ were a very eloquent people who used to compose beautiful and excellent poetry, still read and appreciated today.

(3) Biblical Prophecies on the Advent of Muhammad ﷺ, the Prophet of Islam

The Biblical prophecies on the advent of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are evidence of the truth of Islam for people who believe in the Bible.



In Deuteronomy 18, Moses stated that God told him: **"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account."** (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)³

From these verses we conclude that the prophet in this prophecy must have the following three characteristics:

- 1) That he will be like Moses.
- 2) That he will come from the brothers of the Israelites, i.e. the Ishmaelites.
- 3) That God will put His words into the mouth of this prophet and that he will declare what God commands him.

Let us examine these three characteristics in more depth.

- (1) See *Al-Borhan fee Oloom Al-Qur'an*, Al-Zarkashy, vol. 2, p. 224.
- (2) See *Al-Borhan fee Oloom Al-Qur'an*, Al-Zarkashy, vol. 2, p. 226.
- (3) The verses of the Bible in this book have been taken from *The NIV Study Bible, New International Version*.

To read the stories of people who have converted to Islam, please visit www.islam-guide.com/stories or refer to the book entitled *Why Islam is Our Only Choice*.¹ At this web page and in this book, you can read the thoughts and feelings of these people, who are from different countries and have different backgrounds and levels of education.

(4) Forgiveness for All Previous Sins

When someone converts to Islam, God forgives all of his previous sins and evil deeds. A man called Amr came to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and said: "Give me your right hand so that I may give you my pledge of loyalty." The Prophet ﷺ stretched out his right hand. Amr withdrew his hand. The Prophet ﷺ said: { What has happened to you, O Amr? } He replied: "I intend to lay down a condition." The Prophet ﷺ asked: { What condition do you intend to put forward? } Amr said: "That God forgive my sins." The Prophet ﷺ said: { Didn't you know that converting to Islam erases all previous sins? }²

After converting to Islam, the person will be rewarded for his or her good and bad deeds according to the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: { Your Lord, Who is blessed and exalted, is most merciful. If someone intends to do a good deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, (a reward of) ten to seven hundred or many more times (the reward of the good deed), will be recorded for him. And if someone intends to do a bad deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, a bad deed will be recorded against him or God will wipe it out. }³



- (1) This book is by Muhammad H. Shahid. For a copy of this book, please visit www.islam-guide.com/stories or contact one of the organizations listed on pages 69-70.
- (2) Narrated in *Saheeh Muslim*, #121, and *Mosnad Ahmad*, #17357.
- (3) Narrated in *Mosnad Ahmad*, #2515, and *Saheeh Muslim*, #131.

Chapter 3

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ISLAM

What Is Islam?

The religion of Islam is the acceptance of and obedience to the teachings of God which He revealed to His last prophet, Muhammad ﷺ.

Some Basic Islamic Beliefs

1) Belief in God:

Muslims believe in one, unique, incomparable God, Who has no son nor partner, and that none has the right to be worshipped but Him alone. He is the true God, and every other deity is false. He has the most magnificent names and sublime perfect attributes. No one shares His divinity, nor His attributes. In the Qur'an, God describes Himself:

﴿ Say: "He is God, the One. God, to Whom the creatures turn for their needs. He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none like Him." ﴾
(Qur'an, 112:1-4)

No one has the right to be invoked, supplicated, prayed to, or shown any act of worship, but God alone.

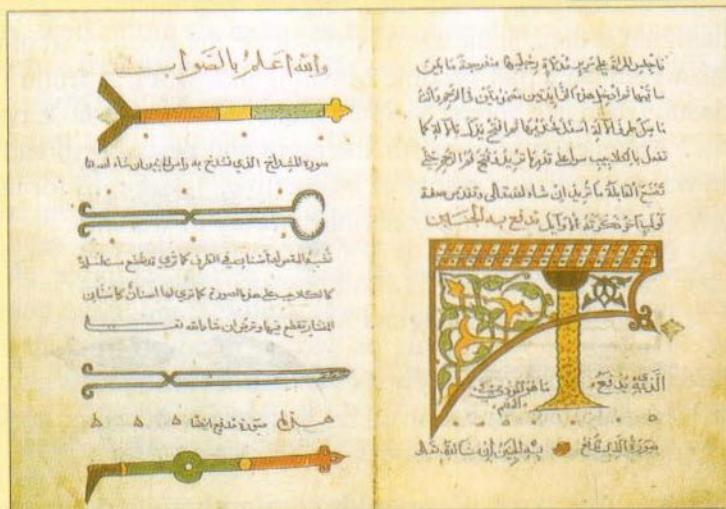


Chapter 112 of the Qur'an written in Arabic calligraphy.

How Did the Spread of Islam Affect the Development of Science?

Islam instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within a few years of the spread of Islam, great civilizations and universities were flourishing. The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas, and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems, such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and the concept of zero (vital to the advancement of

The astrolabe: One of the most important scientific instruments developed by Muslims which was also used widely in the West until modern times.



Muslim physicians paid much attention to surgery and developed many surgical instruments as seen in this old manuscript.

mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from the Muslim world. Sophisticated instruments which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery, such as the astrolabe, the quadrant, and good navigational maps, were also developed by Muslims.

What Do Muslims Believe about Jesus?

Muslims respect and revere Jesus (peace be upon him). They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. The Qur'an confirms his virgin birth, and a chapter of the Qur'an is entitled '*Maryam*' (Mary). The Qur'an describes the birth of Jesus as follows:

« (Remember) when the angels said: "O Mary, God gives you good news of a word from Him (God), whose name is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, revered in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (to God). He will speak to the people from his cradle and as a man, and he is of the righteous." She said: "My Lord, how can I have a child when no mortal has touched me?" He said: "So (it will be). God creates what He wills. If He decrees a thing, He says to it only, 'Be!' and it is." » (Qur'an, 3:45-47)

Jesus was born miraculously by the command of God which had brought Adam into being without a father. God has said:

« The case of Jesus with God is like the case of Adam. He created him from dust, and then He said to him, "Be!" and he came into being. » (Qur'an, 3:59)

During his prophetic mission, Jesus performed many miracles. God tells us that Jesus said:

Mothers in Islam are highly honored. Islam recommends treating them in the best way. A man came to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and said: “O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?” The Prophet ﷺ said: { Your mother. } The man said: “Then who?” The Prophet ﷺ said: { Then your mother. } The man further asked: “Then who?” The Prophet ﷺ said: { Then your mother. } The man asked again: “Then who?” The Prophet ﷺ said: { Then your father. }¹

(Please visit www.islam-guide.com/women for more information on women in Islam.)

The Family in Islam

The family, which is the basic unit of civilization, is now disintegrating. Islam's family system brings the rights of the husband, wife, children, and relatives into a fine equilibrium. It nourishes unselfish behavior, generosity, and love in the framework of a well-organized family system. The peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued, and it is seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its members. A harmonious social order is created by the existence of extended families and by treasuring children.

How Do Muslims Treat the Elderly?

In the Islamic world, one rarely finds “old people's homes.” The strain of caring for one's parents in this most difficult time of their lives is considered an honor and a blessing and an opportunity for great spiritual growth. In Islam, it is not enough that we only pray for our parents, but we should act with limitless compassion, remembering that when we were helpless children, they preferred us to themselves. Mothers are particularly honored. When Muslim parents reach old age, they are treated mercifully, with kindness and selflessness.

(1) Narrated in *Saheeh Muslim*, #2548, and *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*, #5971.

In Islam, serving one's parents is a duty second to prayer, and it is their right to expect it. It is considered despicable to express any irritation when, through no fault of their own, the old become difficult.

God has said:

« Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them, but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say: “My Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small.” » (Qur'an, 17:23-24)

What Are the Five Pillars of Islam?

The Five Pillars of Islam are the framework of a Muslim's life. They are the testimony of faith, prayer, giving *zakat* (support of the needy), fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime for those who are able.

1) The Testimony of Faith:

The testimony of faith is saying with conviction, “*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasoolu Allah.*” This saying means “There is no true god but God (Allah),¹ and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God.” The first part, “There is no true god but God,” means that none has the right to be worshipped but God alone, and that God has neither partner nor son. This testimony of faith is called the *Shahada*, a simple formula which should be said with conviction in order to convert to Islam (as explained above on pages 52-53). The testimony of faith is the most important pillar of Islam.

(1) For more details on the word *Allah*, see the next to last paragraph of page 47.